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ART. V. *Lettres écrites d'Italie en 1812 et 13, à M. Charles Pictet, l'un des Rédacteurs de la Bibliothèque Britannique, par Frédéric Sullin de Chateauneux. A Paris et à Genève. 1816, 2 vols. 12mo. pp. 576.*

PERHAPS there are none of our natural advantages which it still remains for us fully to appreciate and avail ourselves of, so much as those which respect the agriculture of our country.

Without running into all the errors of the œconomists or adopting their entire theory, we trust that we may assert the paramount importance of this pursuit, particularly to the United States. To every country it affords at least a partial, and often a complete subsistence for its population; it gives a constant and healthful employment to sometimes more than half, and never less than a fifth of the community; its profits though not so large, are more certain than those in other employments of capital; and while it replaces the annual advance invested, a surplus profit has accrued, and an accession of national wealth been secured, which can be employed as private interest and the public good may require.* But in the United States the cultivation of the soil has these and many more advantages; nay, it is intimately connected with our national character, because it powerfully acts upon the morals and constitution of our citizens. If it be true, that the torch of liberty has always burned with a purer and brighter lustre on the mountains than on the plains, it is still more true, that the sentiments of honour and integrity more generally animate the rough but manly form of the farmer, than the debilitated body of the artisan. There is in that primitive and honourable occupation, the culture of the earth, something which, while it pours into the lap of the state an increase beyond every other employment, gives more than the fabled stone, not only a subsistence but a placid feeling of content-

* 'Farmers and country labourers, on the contrary, may enjoy completely the whole funds destined for their own subsistence, and yet augment at the same time the revenue and wealth of their society. Over and above what is destined for their own subsistence, their industry annually affords a neat produce, of which the augmentation necessarily augments the revenue and wealth of their society.' *Smith's Wealth of Nations*, vol. iii. p. 178.

'Farmers and country labourers, indeed, over and above the stock which maintains and employs them, reproduce annually a neat produce, a free rent to the landlord.' *Ibid.* p. 186.

ment ; not only creates the appetite to enjoy, but guarantees its continuance by a robust constitution, fortified with the safeguards of temperance and virtue.

The anxiety of our countrymen to possess in fee a spot of ground however small, and the consequent paucity of leases, is a fact no less curious than it is solitary. This is not the case, or at least in any considerable degree, in any other country. Such indeed in Britain were formerly those small proprietors called Franklins, who possessed a keen spirit of independence and a determined opposition to oppression ; feelings, which, with the alienation of their farms, have gradually departed from the breasts of their descendants.

Notwithstanding, however, the ease with which the pride of independent possession may be gratified, it is not the less true, that agriculture, instead of being a favoured, has been a degraded and unpopular pursuit ; that instead of cherishing every motive which might lead to its honourable extension, we have endeavoured gradually to weaken its legitimate efforts. It is indeed a singular inquiry, why the cultivation of the soil among us should have been so little encouraged, when every state in Europe, since the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, has turned its most assiduous attention to this most important department of domestic œconomy, and ultimately borrowed from it the resources which have carried them through the prodigious conflicts of the last generation.

There have been many causes, certainly not all of equal efficacy, which have co-operated against the interests of agriculture. But there is a prominent one to which we can but just allude. During a very considerable period, since the peace of '83, the peculiar situation of Europe has afforded opportunities for commercial enterprize too tempting to be resisted. American merchants received, in the lapse of a very few years, the most astonishing accessions of wealth ; and fortunes, ordinarily the fruit of a laborious life, and never the portion of many, were amassed with unparalleled rapidity, and by large numbers. Our domestic prosperity more than equalled the extension of our trade. It was then that the counting-houses of our merchants were filled with youth from the country, who forsook the slower but surer emoluments of agriculture, for the mushroom but unsubstantial fortunes of commerce ; nay, who preferred the meanest drudgery behind the counter of a retail-dealer, to the manly

and invigorating toil of the cultivator of his paternal acres. Unfortunately this spirit of migration was encouraged by too great a success in trade. Feelings of vulgar pride contracted in town caused the manual labour of the farmer to be regarded as degrading ; this unworthy sentiment spread with baleful influence, and when the counting-houses became overstocked and afforded no longer a resource, it was no uncommon thing to see a young man with no qualifications but a little bad Latin picked up at a miserable village school, forsake a large and fertile farm and apprentice himself to a poor country attorney.

Another cause of the depressed state of agriculture, mentioned in a late publication,* is the constant emigration to the west. There must necessarily be a tendency to a most impoverishing system of cultivation, where people feel that after having extracted all the richness of the soil, they may throw it up and remove to a country, which offers them an untouched surface, and needs no artificial aid of composts or manure. The land, besides suffering from negligence consequent on the prospect of departure, will be worn out by successive crops, and long be rendered unfit for the more valuable dispositions of the agriculturalist. Indeed we have been informed, that in many instances, when the land is almost ruined by the continued culture of tobacco, it is sold by the planter to some enterprising and laborious individual, who may restore it by his patience and attention, while he himself removes to another spot, where the same wretched system of exhaustion may again be renewed. There are other causes we might mention, such as the unwieldy size of our farms, and particularly the want of a regular, enlightened farming system. But we cannot now stop to enter on these topics, but may notice them hereafter.

If then agriculture be so important an item in a nation's resources, affording subsistence to its population, and a surplus capital to be employed in the various objects of national industry and enterprise, it would seem to follow, that nothing but very imperious circumstances should induce any government to repress its vigor or palsy the exertions of those devoted to it. Immediately connected with such an attempt was the late bill before Congress, establishing a new tariff of duties. But why go back to a bill which was rejected ? We

* Letters on the Eastern States.

answer, that it is not to be forgotten that private interest is one of the most powerful incentives to action, that the manufacturing interest is large and increasing, that one defeat will not discourage its partisans, and lastly, extraordinary as the fact may seem, that the bill in question, fraught with such varied evil, was thrown out by a majority of only *one* vote in the senate. The tendency of this project, was not only to introduce an unequal system of taxation, but first, by the destruction of a large part of our foreign commerce, to diminish very materially the market for our home products. and secondly, to divert a large portion of agricultural industry into the service of the loom and spinning jenny.

But it will be asked, are manufactures then to be entirely neglected? Most certainly not. Still there is a certain limit, in a newly settled country with a thin population, beyond which their establishment is not only useless to government but a burden to the people. It is undoubtedly true that the manufacture of articles of immediate necessity or very general circulation ought to be encouraged by a wise and provident people; but it ordinarily happens that these need no extraordinary patronage; their extended use soon gives a facility to the artist, which enables him to enter into competition with the foreigner, provided the raw material is to be found at home in any tolerable abundance. Thus we find that hats were manufactured in the colonies at a very early period; together with household furniture, saddlery, &c. they have long since ceased to be an article of importation. It is necessary for the well-being and security of a nation, that certain articles should be manufactured within its limits, such as gunpowder, coarse clothing, and some others of a similar description.* But the moment a people attempt to force by means of high duties on foreign imports the production of a commodity, which, by reason of the extravagance of the wages of labour and other causes, must necessarily be sold at a much greater price than the imported one, their conduct would seem no less an affront to common sense, than a solecism in political œconomy.

The United States possess a very restricted capital, and as the tilling of the soil requires comparatively much fewer advances than any other department of industry, that capital became immediately invested in agriculture. Land, cheap and fertile,

* See our last number, p. 323, &c.

constituted a fund which gave a certain profit. And as the productions of the labour of more than five-eighths of our population went to purchase foreign articles either of luxury or necessity, a great and profitable intercourse was constantly maintained with Europe. Under an equitable system of foreign duties, arising from this commerce, the expenses of government were defrayed, our debt gradually extinguished, and by a powerful but necessary reaction our agriculture improved and extended. But the tariff bill restricted a large and valuable commerce principally with Britain. It is not to be supposed that, while we refused the broadcloths and hardware of England, she would still continue to buy the same proportion of our cotton and tobacco. Our market then for these articles would be so far lost ; and if we now feel the effects of a diminished demand for our produce in consequence of the establishment of peace in Europe, how can it be thought a wise policy to suffer other embarrassments and losses, by excluding ourselves entirely from every foreign port where we might calculate upon its sale ? Where then is our produce to find a vent ? For assuredly the most enthusiastic friend of domestic manufactures could never imagine, that the most extensive establishment of them could ever give an adequate consumption for the present amount of our agricultural productions.

The bill then imposing heavy duties on foreign articles, besides diminishing the number of the cultivators of the soil, would in some degree operate as a tax on its fruits, because, while the price of manufactures was enormously increased, the value of produce would be more than proportionally diminished. For the cultivator, not only deprived of the benefit of a competition between the domestic and foreign consumer in the sale of his articles, is obliged to purchase those of his neighbour, at any price which his cupidity and the tariff may determine. The expenses of the state being still the same and its usual resources dried up, a general but unequal system of taxation would be adopted, when in fact, the farmer bending under the weight of this partial policy, is less able to pay whatever contribution may be levied. These assertions are by no means novel, they are mere collaries from the plainest and most undoubted principles of political œconomy. Dr. Adam Smith, the great father of the science, and all whose views on this subject, though not act-

ed upon in a country whose domestic policy was too firmly established to be changed without a most serious revolution, ought to have great weight with us in the adoption of any permanent system, speaks in this decided manner in his *Wealth of Nations*, vol. iii. p. 201. 'It is thus that every system which endeavours, either by extraordinary encouragements, to draw towards a particular species of industry a greater share of the capital of the society, than what would naturally go to it; or, by extraordinary restraints, to force from particular species of industry some share of the capital which would otherwise be employed in it; is in reality subversive of the great purpose which it means to promote. It retards instead of accelerating the progress of the society towards real wealth and greatness; and diminishes instead of increasing the real value of the annual produce of its land and labour. All systems, either of preference or restraint therefore, being thus completely taken away, the obvious and simple system of natural liberty establishes itself of its own accord. Every man, as long as he does not violate the laws of justice, is left perfectly free to pursue his own interest his own way, and to bring both his industry and capital into competition with those of any other man or order of men.' M. Say, a man no less remarkable for his practical knowledge of manufacturing industry, than his profound acquaintance with every branch of economical science, has given his marked disapprobation of that system which we are discussing. 'Lorsqu'au travers de cette marche naturelle des choses,' says he, 'l'autorité se montre et dit : le produit, qu'on veut créer, celui qui donne les meilleurs profits, et par conséquent celui qui est le plus recherché, n'est pas celui qui convient, il faut qu'on s'occupe de tel autre; elle dirige évidemment une partie de la production vers un genre, dont le besoin se fait sentir davantage.'—*Traité d'Economie Politique*, tom. i. p. 168. We can only refer to pages 172 and 201 for the expansion of these ideas. It is thus we find that the arguments adduced in favour of this system neither accord with the convictions of fact nor the suggestions of reason. Whenever the increasing capital devoted to the land can no longer be profitably employed, then manufactures will flourish and the surplus profits of agriculture be legitimately devoted to their support.

During the late war, the prospect of large gains caused by the extravagant price of all European commodities, caused many persons in our country to embark their fortunes in cotton and woollen factories. These factories were brought into being by a temporary and unnatural state of things. On the return of the peace of 1814, many of these manufacturing establishments came of necessity to an end. Some establishments remain and ought to succeed, because they prove that the profits of their capital may enter into competition with that employed in agriculture. In this case the transfer is not only natural but conducive to national wealth.

But we are asked to patronize manufactures at the expense of agriculture, on the ground of our being rendered really more independent by them. This is, however, but an attempt to conceal private interest under the garb of patriotism,* and ought at least to awaken suspicion. We are not to be called *dependent* merely because a state of war might give rise to many inconveniences. We can do without silks or broadcloths, while we possess the real means of sustenance and defence. But these factories once established, say the advocates of this interest, the citizens ought to support them in their present languishing condition, and therefore ought not to buy, even at a much less price, foreign articles in preference to our own. The force and propriety of such reasoning would appear to be similar to that of a gardener, who having in winter devoted himself to the cultivation of flowers &c. by means of artificial heat, should in the spring apply for an act of the municipal authority, forbidding all persons to pluck a daisy or violet in the field, and requiring them to resort to his hot-house. So far from there being a necessity for any interference on the part of government, we believe we may assert that our manufactures never were so flourishing as since the peace. It is true that many estab-

* ' Qui est-ce qui sollicite des prohibitions ou de forts droits d'entrée dans un état ? ce sont les producteurs de la denrée dont il s'agit de prohiber la concurrence, et non pas les consommateurs. Ils disent : c'est pour l'intérêt de l'état ; mais il est clair que c'est pour le leur uniquement. — N'est-ce pas la même chose, continuent-ils, et ce que nous gagnons n'est-il pas autant de gagné pour notre pays ? point de tout : — ce que vous gagnez de cette manière est tiré de la poche de votre voisin, d'un habitant du même pays ; et si l'on pouvait compter l'excédant de dépense fait par les consommateurs, en conséquence de votre monopole, on trouverait qu'il surpasse le gain que le monopole vous a valu.' *Traité d'Economie Politique* par Jean-Baptiste Say, tom. i. p. 203.

lishments have been broken up and much capital sunk, but it is a fact that those factories which are in the hands of individuals, have generally been successful, while those conducted by incorporated companies wanting the circumspection and prudence of private interest, have as often become bankrupt. In the western states this branch of business has greatly improved, and recent information enables us to affirm, that the profits which are now realised are nearly as large as those during the war. In the east, we might cite an instance, which must put down all cavil on this subject. The cotton factory at Waltham near Boston,* begun when manufactures were by no means in so promising a situation as at present, is a triumphant answer to every one who demands additional encouragement for the loom, and a new tax on his brethren to extend its operations.

But we hasten to return from our wanderings, and to introduce our readers to the work, of which we have prefixed the title to this article. It is in the form of letters addressed to Professor Pictet of Geneva, from various places in Italy, and contains the author's remarks upon that country. He dwells not on the palaces of Venice, neither worships at the altar of Roman genius in the Pantheon, but taking his silent way through the fields, he describes that which gave birth to both : he informs us of the processes of Italian farming, of the effects of irrigation, and of the general state of Italian agriculture. And, in our opinion, he has shewn as much taste in the execution of his design, as those travellers who have employed themselves upon inquiries commonly thought as interesting, but certainly not as useful. M. de Chateauevieux appears to be an enthusiastic admirer of the subject on which he writes, as well as to have a practical knowledge of all its details. His book is very little known among us, though it has lately been translated in England, and formerly occupied the attention of a celebrated critical journal of that country. It is our intention in this article to put our readers in mind of its existence.

The author divides Italy into three regions, distinguished by their different systems of cultivation. The first extends from mount Cenis and the Alps of Suza to the shores of the Adriatic. The fertility of Lombardy is proved by the constant succession of its crops, and to this province he has given

* See Letters on the Eastern States—Letter on Manufactures.

the name of 'Pays de Culture par assolement,' or the district of culture by rotation of crops. The second of the regions reposes on the southern declivity of the Appennines, from the frontiers of Provence to the boundaries of Calabria. This is called the District of Olive trees, or, by an association somewhat forced, of Canaanitish culture. The third region is that of *Maluria* or patriarchal cultivation, from a supposed resemblance, which we are still less able to enter into, between the shepherds of the older and the present time. It is found from Pisa to Terracina, and comprehends the plain between the sea and the first ridge of the Appennines.

Lombardy has been often called the Garden of Europe, and seems abundantly entitled to the appellation. The soil is not only rich and alluvial, but deep and perfectly level. The climate is humid, and the system of irrigation supplies water to almost every field. These circumstances, united to the heat of a southern sun, cause a most rapid and luxurious vegetation. Nothing can be more important in the œconomy of a farm than the situation of the farm-house and its out-buildings. In this respect our American farmers are lamentably deficient, and though we would not recommend as a model the one described by de Chateaueux as common in Lombardy, still we think it would afford some valuable hints. The buildings raised on the four sides of a square, present on one side a central elevation of two stories. The lower part for the farmer, the upper story for his grain. Adjoining this, at each end, is a stable plastered so as not to let the dust descend, for the cows and oxen; the other three sides of the square are enclosed by a sort of portico, open within and supported by columns, which serves as a depository for straw, hay, &c. This structure is about twenty-four feet broad and fifteen high. Half the court is paved, the remainder is used for threshing out the corn, which, in the primitive way, is still done by horses. The place for manure is outside of the court. This plan presents the most space with the least building, and assures the preservation of every product.

The farms in Lombardy are small, and do not often contain sixty arpents;* notwithstanding M. de Chateaueux asserts against Arthur Young, that they bring more to market than the large farms, and that there is no country in the

* An arpent is to an acre nearly as five to four.

world which can dispose of so large a portion of its productions as Piedmont. If the fact be so, it may possibly arise from the peculiar character of the persons who cultivate the land. Our author, however, remarks, that this system of small farms can never take place till the advances of capital have carried agriculture to its highest point. Lombardy is cultivated by a species of farmers, called *metayers*. They pay a small fixed rent, valued at one half the produce of the meadow, or forty francs the arpent. The clover belongs to them entirely; the crops of wheat, Indian corn, and flax, and the wine and silk are equally divided between them and their landlord. The latter advances nothing but the taxes, and of course must find such an arrangement singularly advantageous. Father and son continue the same engagement without the formality of a lease or any registry of the contract. M. Say regards this system as unfavourable to agriculture, and in his treatise on Political Economy, book ii. chap. 9, vol. 2, says, ‘il y a des cultivateurs qui n’ont rien, et auxquels le propriétaire fournit le capital avec la terre : on les appelle des *Métayers*. Ils rendent communément au propriétaire la moitié du produit brut. Ce genre de culture appartient à un état peu avancé de l’agriculture, et il est le plus défavorable de tout aux améliorations des terres ; car celui des deux, du propriétaire ou du fermier, qui ferait l’amélioration à ses frais, admettrait l’autre à jouir gratuitement de la moitié de l’interêt de ses avances.’ Though the cultivation of land by *metayers* may be unfavourable to its amelioration, still it may be easily imagined, that the smaller products of every little farm will be greater, as each must possess both a garden and a poultry yard. Every field in Lombardy is encircled with a band of poplars, mulberries, oaks, &c. and they are often so thick that the eye can scarcely penetrate the rich growth of leaves. From the boughs, luxuriant vines hang in festoons, and present to the passing traveller a scene of rural beauty and enjoyment which he may search for in vain in other countries. The shade of the trees does not injure the crops, such is the invigorating effect of a humid soil and an Italian sky.

Of the constant succession of crops we here know very little ; indeed it is the result of experience alone. So much depends on climate, that we imagine the rotation practised elsewhere can never afford certain information to us. The

largest quantity of the most valuable produce, which may be taken from a spot of ground in any number of years, is a problem whose solution is of the greatest importance. In Piedmont the rotation is generally as follows :

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|-----------|---|--|
| 1st year, | { | Indian corn, manured, |
| | | Beans—hemp. |
| 2d “ | | Wheat. |
| 3d “ | | Clover, turned up after the first cutting
and followed by a fallow. |
| 4th “ | | Wheat. |

This rotation, says M. de Chateauvieux, is one of the most abundant, and may be pursued indefinitely, notwithstanding the recurrence of wheat, though perhaps the result may be attributed to the abundance of manure furnished by a meadow cut three times. After stating that a farm of sixty arpents supported a family of eight or nine persons, who kept twenty-two head of large cattle, of which two oxen and a cow are fattened every year, as well as one or two hogs, that it gave about one hundred and twenty-five dollars worth of silk, and furnished more wine than could be consumed, that the preparatory crop of Indian corn and beans almost subsisted the metayers, and that nearly all the grain might be sold, as well as a great quantity of smaller products, he celebrates the industry and management of the Piedmontese proprietors in the following terms : ‘ It will be easy for you, after this, to conceive how Piedmont is perhaps, of all countries, that where the economy and management of land is best understood, and the phenomenon of its great population and immense exportation of produce will thus be explained.’

In the neighbourhood of Piacenza, cattle rather than grain constitute the wealth of the farmer. The cows and oxen are distinguished by immense horns and beautiful figures, and we believe that our American race is in no way to be compared with them. Their origin is said to be Hungarian ; the males are noble animals, but the cows give little milk. To remedy this inconvenience, two thousand cows are imported from Switzerland, and the valuable qualities of the animal are thus perpetuated. The cattle are almost universally of a slate-grey colour. The rotation of crops is here as follows :

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|-----------|--------------------------------|
| 1st year, | Indian corn and hemp, manured, |
| 2d “ | Wheat, |
| 3d “ | Winter beans, |

- 4th year, Wheat, manured,
- 5th “ Clover, ploughed after the first cutting,
- 6th “ Wheat.

This succession, however, can only be pursued in a rich soil, which is manured every three years. There is one article we beg leave to notice particularly. We imagine that the winter bean might easily be introduced among us and with great advantage, as it is capable of supporting the cold of the severest winter. It is sown in the beginning of September, and it must have considerable growth before autumn to resist the attacks of the cold. The stalk then perishes by the frost, but at the moment the genial warmth of the spring is felt, two or three new stalks arise, which bloom in the month of May, and the beans are fit to gather at the end of July. The management of this important vegetable we give in the words of the author. ‘*La culture est extrêmement simple ; après la récolte du blé fumé, on retourne la terre par un seul labour et on la laisse émietter par l’influence de la saison. Aux premiers jours de Septembre on sème les fèves, soit en les enterrant à la charrue, soit en les recouvrant à la herse, soit enfin avec le semoir, qui les place par rangées, de manière à pouvoir au printemps les sarcler avec la houe à cheval. Si on ne suit pas cette dernière méthode, il faut les sarcler à la main, dans le courant d’avril.*’ The culture of the winter bean is suited to argillaceous soils, and while it allows the proper intervals between ploughing the ground and sowing wheat which succeeds, it is admirably calculated to maintain the fertility of the ground.

The plains which border on the Po, in the vicinity of Parma and Lodi, support those fine animals, whose milk is converted into the celebrated Parmesan cheese. The grass is here far more valuable than any crop of grain. In the summer the cows are housed and fed with the green grass of the first and second mowings : that of the third is converted into hay. At the end of autumn the cows are allowed to pick up whatever may be left in the fields. These meadows are perhaps the most fertile on earth ; they are generally mowed four times a year. The cheese is here never made from less than fifty cows, and as the farms are small, there is one common establishment, to which the milk is brought twice during the day ; an account of it is kept by the cheese-maker and

settled in cheese every six months. The same plan has been introduced in Switzerland.

In the Milanese, the farms are larger than in other parts of Italy, because the culture of the grasses demands less care and labour than other branches of farming, and fewer advances. Irrigation is here carried to such an extent, that every two or three arpents can be inundated by its own canal. The good quality of the grass however in time becomes deteriorated, other plants gradually spring up in the place of the grasses; the sluices are then closed, and the ground is ploughed for hemp; after which, and a crop of legumes, oats, and wheat, it is again laid down in grass. A meadow will generally last fifteen years, and the course of harvests returns every five. M. de Chateaufieux gives the following remarkable outline :

- 1st year Hemp, followed by legumes,
- 2d " Oats,
- 3d " Wheat, followed by legumes,
- 4th " Indian corn,
- 5th " Wheat,
- 15th " Natural meadow, dunged every three
 years, and mowed four times a year.

20 years 67.

Of these sixty-seven crops from the same ground there are sixty-one for the use of animals, five for the sustenance of man, and only one for his clothing. There is perhaps no country on the face of the earth which can boast such a proportion of agricultural products. To obtain this result, the ground is manured, very profusely however, five times in twenty years, and it is a singular fact that this manure is applied always to the grass and never to the grain.

The culture of rice occupies a part of Italy, and is a source of great profit to the owner of the soil. The difficulties in its cultivation are so trifling, that contrary to the usual custom, the ground is let out at a fixed rent of one hundred and sixty francs the arpent; three crops are received every five years. As with us, these rice grounds are most unhealthy, and the stagnant water which covers them produces disease in all the surrounding country. The unfortunate peasant rarely escapes its deleterious effect, and the government, sensible of this constant draft on human life, have prohibited the further extension of the culture of this grain.

One of the most singular features in the physical character of Italy, is the constant elevation of the beds of rivers, particularly the Arno and the Po, by means of depositions of earth and stones, brought down by the heavy rains from the mountains. This had become so alarming, that the raising of dykes yielded to a very ingenious operation called *Colmata*, by which the water of the river was allowed to overflow a certain space, and this very deposition, about three or four inches in a year, made to raise the level of the adjacent shores. But this process, which is fully described by Sismondi, must necessarily have a limit. Embankments are resorted to, and in some places the bed of the Po is absolutely thirty feet above the level country. The Po even now frequently overflows and devastates its banks; the inhabitants, provided always for the calamity which unfortunately is not unfrequent, take to their boats and wait till the inundation has subsided. There would seem to be little doubt that at some day not far distant, the whole delta of the Po, or *Polesino*, as it is called, will become one wide and wretched marsh. Even now the roads are often impassable. Ferrara, consecrated by the genius of Ariosto and Tasso, will be extinguished, and Ravenna, already fallen from its high honours, be known only as the deserted capital of a potentate of the lower empire.

M. de Chateaufieux, climbing the mountains which separate Tuscany from Modena, and leaving behind him the fertile plains of Lombardy, entered those lofty regions, where the earth does not produce sufficient sustenance for the inhabitants, who are employed with their flocks of goats and sheep, in constantly traversing the mountains in a manner somewhat similar to that of the Spanish shepherds. The author employs himself in describing the scenery of the Corniche, and though it is perhaps among the finest in Europe, and he might have felt all its changeful beauty and sublimity, still we think that he is far more fortunate in his delineations of rural economy.

The agriculture of Tuscany has been so fully and ably investigated by Sismondi,* that little was left to M. de Chateaufieux. The valley of the Arno, in truth the only fertile part of the dukedom. (for the rest is composed of precipitous mountains, or that silent and hideous district the Maremma)

* Tableau de l'agriculture Toscane, par J. C. L. Sismondi.

stretches from Cortona to Pisa, and forms about one sixth of its whole territory. The farms are very small, being from three to six arpents, so that one pair of oxen supplies the necessities of ten or twelve metayers, in the working of their little plat of ground. They manifest, however, their extravagance in maintaining a horse, which may transport their produce to market, and their wives and daughters to mass or a rustic ball. The most general rotation of crops is here,

1st year, Indian corn, beans, peas or other legumes.
dunged.

2d " Wheat,

3d “ Winter beans.

4th " Wheat,

5th " Clover sown after the wheat, cut in the spring and followed by *sorgho*.

This *sorgho* is a sort of parsnip, which is reduced into flour, of which they make a bad soup and a poor polente. The ground is manured only once in five years, a circumstance which abundantly proves the richness of this deep alluvial soil. Notwithstanding all this fertility and a cultivation which resembles rather that of a garden, than a farm, the country does not produce enough to resist the effects of a bad year. The metayers live with the greatest economy, and though their cottages are built with a taste which seems indigenous to the country, the interior exhibits a total absence of all the conveniences of life, and supplies but a frugal subsistence. Such is the view which M. de Chateauvieux has taken. But in our opinion the peasantry of Tuscany under all circumstances, are not only more neat in their persons, but better clothed and apparently enjoying more happiness, than that of any other district in Italy. There can be little doubt, that all this distress and privation arises from the system of the metayers; a system which, deriving its existence from the feudal state, is equally to be deprecated, whether we consider the political character of the community or the individual happiness of its members. The man who has no other possession than his industry, and who cannot hope to change his situation, can never have such a stake in the state, as to render him either an intelligent or valuable member of it. On the other hand, the metayer bound to furnish half the seed and to divide and sell the produce.

pretty generally consumes one year the fruits of the last ; or if there be a surplus, how is it to be invested ? There would seem to be no other mode, than in the sticks which he is bound to supply, for the support of the vines, for the landlord provides the stock and repairs the house. He then can only lay up his money in his chest or spend it on his pleasures. Thus the end of a year finds him no better off than at its commencement, for want of such an interest in the soil, as would secure him from the effects of his negligence and indifference in its cultivation.

Before leaving this part of Italy, we ought to mention a subject which is of some little importance ; the manufacture of straw hats, which has just commenced in our country. It is doubtless a most profitable exertion of industry. The raw material costs nothing, and M. de Chateaufieux informs us that this branch annually amounts to three millions (we presume) of francs. The straw is of beardless wheat, cut before it is ripe, and whose vegetation has been thinned (*étiolée*) by the sterility of the soil. This soil is chosen among calcareous hills ; it is never manured, and the grain is sown very thick. The women who are employed in making the Leghorn hats, earn from about thirty to forty cents per day, no trifling sum in Italy.

The Maremma or country of the Malaria forms the third district, extending from Leghorn to Terracina, and from the sea to the mountains, and having a width of twenty five or thirty miles. M. de Chateaufieux speaks of this singular country in the following terms : ‘ *Le ciel reste également pur, la verdure aussi fraîche, l’air aussi calme ; la sérénité de cet aspect semble devoir inspirer une entière confiance, et je ne saurais cependant vous exprimer l’espèce d’effroi que l’on éprouve malgré soi en respirant cet air à la fois si suave et si funeste.*’ A country so very singular in its character would necessarily require a very peculiar system of management. Our author develops this system in a visit he made, to a domain called Campo Morto, in the most deserted part of the Maremma. Here was a Fattore, charged with the administration of the farm. The whole Maremma of Rome is in the hands of eighty proprietors, who are called *mercanti de’ tenuti*, and reside as well as their *Fattori* in the city. On this farm there were four hundred horses, of which one hundred were broken, two thousand hogs, which

ran in the woods and fed on the acorns; some hundreds of cows, who give no other revenue than the sale of the calves, which is estimated at about eight dollars each cow; one hundred oxen used to the plough, and about four thousand sheep. The rent of this farm was about eighteen francs the arpent of cultivated land, amounting in all to about \$ 22,000. The annual profit was about \$ 5000, besides interest at five per cent. on the capital of the flocks.

In the midst of this establishment there was a vast *casale* or farm-house, destitute of furniture and inhabited but a very few days in the year. Every thing around breathed the most perfect desolation; all was vast and silent. The harvest had just commenced and a thousand labourers, of whom one half were women, had descended from the mountains to gain a small pittance during a few days, by reaping the rich grain of six hundred and sixty arpents for the lordly proprietor, and if they did not perish at their toil, to go back after having respired the elements of a miserable death. Some days had elapsed since the harvest began, and only two labourers had been attacked by the fever of the Malaria; every day would, however, increase the number, till at the completion of their task, scarcely half of them would remain. 'What then becomes of these unfortunate people?' said M. de Chateauvieux. 'They get a piece of bread and are sent off,' was the inhuman reply. 'But where do they go to?' 'To the mountains; some stop on the road, some die, others get home almost expiring with misery and famine, only to follow the same life the next year.'

The Malaria is one of those singular phenomena whose origin has baffled every effort at discovery, and the remedy for which has never yet been ascertained. Attempts have been made to cultivate the soil of the Maremma, and colonies were established within its circuit, but the resistless scythe of sure and silent death swept away the presumptuous intruders. During half of the year, a few miserable beings, armed with lances and clothed in skins, the living images of death, wander over these devoted plains with their flocks; and if accident should delay their return to the mountains, fall certain victims to this fatal disease. Immense numbers of sheep, cows, horses, and goats find a subsistence on these wastes and supply the markets of Rome and the Val d'Arno.

The soil is extremely steril; the whiteness of the pure argil being only alloyed by a mixture of sulphur, which is produced in great profusion. The cause of the Malaria, as we before remarked, has escaped all the investigations of science; it still remains a mystery no less profound, than its effects are dreadful. Some have supposed it to arise from the low pools of stagnant waters, which collect on the face of the Maremma; but the disease prevails on the heights of Radicofani and within the lofty precincts of Volterra.

Some have supposed that the disease was caused by exposure to the sudden changes of temperature at the going down of the sun.* This is supported, it is true, by the very weighty fact related by de Bonstetten in his *Voyage au Latium*, of a man who resided at Ardea sixteen years without being indisposed. But we doubt whether any solution that has ever been proposed was so perfectly ridiculous or so completely destitute of foundation. Do the people then die in the towns of this disease, where we know it to be a custom not to go out after dark, of mere exposure to a changing atmosphere? A short distance from the Porta del Popolo at Rome are two villas, one on each side of a small lane, but both situated on high ground. We were informed that during the summer season, a man would run very imminent danger of death in sleeping in one, while he might remain in the other with perfect impunity. How is this to be reconciled with the doctrine that the disease caused by the Malaria is nothing but fever and ague, brought on by exposure? The truth is, this dreadful enemy every year makes further inroads; no longer satisfied with pursuing the wretched thousands of enervated labourers and shepherds, who at evening crowd for safety into Rome, it is advancing into the city in the midst of darkness, and spreading from the Porta del Popolo, on the one side, and from the Palatine on the other, up the sides of the Quirinal. In 1791, says M. de Chateauvieux, Rome had a population of 160,000; at the time of this visit, it numbered only 100,000, of whom more than 10,000 were gardeners, shepherds, and vine-dressers. Four years afterwards we heard it computed at from 80 to 90,000. Undoubtedly political events have had no small effect in diminishing the number of inhabitants; but still we believe the Malaria must have had a no less powerful in-

* See Edinburgh Review for March 1817, p. 57.

fluence. Annually it roams over the finest villas without the walls and ravages large districts of the town within; and neither the magnificence of the villa Borghese, nor the luxuriant beauty and towering pines of Doria Pamfili, can resist the assaults of this silent and deadly foe. Time seems to hold its mantle over the queen of cities, and to prepare by a fate as extraordinary as its former history, to blot it out from the admiration of mortals. Encompassed already by the awful stillness of a desolate waste, once filled up with sixty towns, which the antiquarian in vain attempts to trace, perhaps her own site may be hereafter unknown; and some future traveller may boast with enthusiasm of having once again penetrated its deserted streets, of having visited the spot ennobled by the heroic virtue of Junius Brutus, or the eloquence and wisdom of Cato the censor. But we must leave a subject, on which we could dwell still longer with delight, and conclude our notice of a book, of which we would hope our readers have received a favourable impression. The subject of the work is not only important in itself, but most interesting to us. Italy is essentially an agricultural country; she is neither a manufacturing nor a commercial state. It is by her agriculture, that she supports more than 17,000,000 of inhabitants, or about 1237 to a square league; a population far superior to that of France or England. It is her agriculture which laid the foundations of those splendid cities which crowd her plains; it is her agriculture, which, should it ever be protected by an enlightened government, will again yield nourishment to the principles of liberty, and raise her to a level with the most respectable nations of Europe. M. de Chateaufvieux has devoted himself to the illustration of this noble subject, and we are confident that his work will not only afford many valuable hints to the practical farmer, but some lessons to our statesmen, in any future attempts which may be made, to elevate manufactures at the expense of the most dear and invaluable interests in our country.